

DEFENCE
OF THE
CASE
OF THE
MINISTERS
Ejected at *EXON*.



K By JAMES PEIRCE.

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Price Four Pence.

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MINISTERS

IN 1834



BY JAMES PRITCHARD

Printed by Andrew Bell, at the
Press of the British Museum, 1834.



A
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EN are so prone to be partial in representing their own case, that but little is to be presum'd from hearing of one side only. The world has now heard what is said on the one side in the *Case*; and on the other side, in *An Account of the Reasons*, why many citizens of Exon have withdrawn from the ministry of Mr. Joseph Hallet and Mr. James Peirce; he

ing an answer to Mr. Peirce's state of the case; and therefore they may now easily judge where the truth lies. It could hardly be expected, that those of the other side would have ever written at all, unless they could have confronted my account in somewhat very material, which they have not so much as attempted; two things only being pretended to be mistakes in the account I gave of the conference, of which I shall speak by and by. The gross charge of injustice in ejecting us is not denied, but only sordily excus'd; as tho' they design'd to fix shame upon themselves and their proceedings, to justify my relation of matters, and to establish the reputation of the larger account which I intend to publish to the world, as soon as I can get time to finish it. And certainly he that relates his own case so fairly, as they of the other side prove I have done, may be depended upon for the faithfulness of his future accounts.

THE clamour which was raised against the *Case*, as soon as 'twas publish'd, made me, I confess, expect a heavy charge to be brought against me for some gross misrepresentation; whereas nothing of this nature is pretended; only 'tis alledg'd that my account is defective, and some former facts are brought in, which I gave the reader reason to expect in due time; and when they shall be publish'd, all that he says concerning them shall be examin'd, and the whole be set in a clear light; so that the whole world shall see I am able to justify my self, in every particular, at quite another rate than those whom I charge are capable of doing.

THE conference, and what follow'd upon it, were all that it was necessary for me to relate, in order to shew we were unjustly ejected. For as the conference was our tryal, and the ground of all subsequent proceedings, so whatever was not laid to

to our charge at that conference is really nothing to the purpose; and the equity of the ejection do's not depend upon our being guilty, but only upon the charge of some guilt's being then proved upon us. I shall therefore wave those matters 'till they shall fall into their proper places, in the larger Account.

I MIGHT tire the reader's patience in recounting the false spelling and false *English* of the *Answer*; but I write not to expose the author, but to justify my self in the account I have given; and therefore shall only touch upon such things as are necessary to be taken notice of.

IT was very material to my purpose to take notice, as I did, *Case* p. 3. ' That there was no attempt made to charge us with denying the true and proper divinity of the Son of God, even in the sense of the ministers article: so that we had not fair dealing in that respect.' The *answer* makes no reply to this; and so it ought to be taken for truth.

HE says, p. 3. *Mr. Peirce confesses* (*Case* p. 3.) This was the cause of his and *Mr. Hallet's* being removed, because they would not own *the Son of God to be one God with the Father*. But this is unfair; it was because we would not submit to any unscriptural test, as is plain from the *Case*. 'Tis because we believe, that when Christ forbids us to call any man master upon earth, he forbids us to suffer them to impose a faith of their own upon us, and that we act contrary to his direction, when we tamely submit our selves to such forms of mens devising. Had the Gentlemen insisted upon my yielding to the contrary proposition, or any unscriptural proposition whatever, as a religious test, I would in like manner have refus'd it; and this they knew beforehand. So that I am remov'd for

no

no other reason than this, that I believe Christ alone has authority to prescribe me a rule of faith.

He says p. 8. *The ministers directed the citizens to no test at all, nor sat [set] up any inquisition, as Mr. Peirce falsely and unjustly insinuates (pa. 2.) but as any one may see by the paper it self, left it discretionary to the people what they would take for satisfaction.* And why such a concern to clear the ministers? If these tests are such evil things, that the ministers must not be charged with drawing them; why did the citizens, according to his own confession, use them? But certainly I had reason to believe, that as the citizens pretended to follow the advice of the seven ministers, and made a test of their second article, it was by their direction. But take it in the answerer's way: was it not their design by the articles to try us whether we would come up to their sense? Whether they intended their words should be a test, as they were used, or that any other unscriptural test to the same purpose should be put to us, signifies little; since tis apparent they intended not we should be tried upon evidence, but by the way of a *test* or *inquisition*. And tho he don't like the word *test*, yet I am much misinform'd, if some did not before hand speak of what was to be done under that name.

As to what he says about the offer made us to take our choice out of four tests, I shall consider it when I come to the citizens paper, because there 'tis express'd in true *English*.

THE world will blush for those who could bear hard upon so excellent a man as Mr. *Withers*, and could refuse to accept that declaration which he offer'd to make in the words of Bp. *Pearson*, as is mention'd in the *Case* p. 4. Their rejecting him at the conference shew'd plainly, that let a man express his faith how he would, they would reject him, unless he would submit to their authority to prescribe words for him. 'Tis not my part to inquire into
any

any circumstances of the satisfaction he has given. I heartily wish he may never be uneasy under that arbitrary power he has submitted to, and that he may have all the comfort and success he can desire. I quarrel with no man for not having just the same apprehensions with my self, provided my own liberty and conscience are not invaded; and I am well satisfied, he is a man of too much good temper, sense and honesty, ever to be accessory to any attempt of that nature.

IN answer to what I said of the manner in which I was brought hither, he says, p. 9. *That 'tis indeed the more sad, that a man so unanimously call'd and so well beloved should unhappily fall into errors, &c.* But this is not proved; nor has there been the least evidence produc'd that I am either in an error, or a pretended one, unless it be that of the subordination; which if an error, is an error common to me, and almost all the divines that have ever written upon the subject. Besides, he do's not touch the matter I alleg'd that for, viz. to shew the cruelty, as well as injustice, of their now picking a quarrel with me, and leaving me, as much as in them lies, in a destitute condition, after they had with so much importunity brought me from a very quiet and comfortable settlement; and that too, when they pretend not to have prov'd any thing against me. I leave this upon their consciences, when I hope they will come to review their conduct in a cooler temper.

HE need be at no loss to account for my complying with the people's invitation, tho' I have not changed my notions of the Trinity since my coming. For he is not able to prove any error upon me; nor can I imagine, why I might not flatter my self, that, by the blessing of God, my service might be useful here, as well as it was elsewhere. And indeed, as I from the first endeavour'd

to preach practical religion with all plainness, without insisting upon controverted speculations, no notions of mine hindred either the acceptableness or usefulness of my endeavours here, 'till a party was form'd against me by some men, whom I heartily pray God to forgive.

I SAID, p. 2. ' The controversy is about explaining the doctrine of the Trinity. ' He says, *this about explaining it away.* Perhaps he may be in the right in some sense; for I confess they who make the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to be in effect but one person, explain away the doctrine; but I hope they who believe them to be three persons, and believe all the scripture says of each, cannot be so charged.

I alledg'd, that neither Mr. *Hallet*, nor I had the least hand in raising this controversy, and that we both endeavour'd to still it when it made a noise.' In answer to which he will pretend to tell *my meaning*: but I hope I may, without offence, let him know, that I do not thank him much for his offer'd service. I hope I can express my meaning plain enough my self; and have done it in that place; and when I want one to express it for me, he is very unlikely to be the man I shall pitch upon, because he appears to me to have a very indifferent talent at expressing his own.

Mr. *Hallet* remembers not that the ever *reported of me, that I propagated these notions, or said downright* all was owing to me. And since he denies it, he cannot be an evidence against me. I have the more reason to believe him, because I know I never gave him ground for any such report. He owns he has said, *People reported so of me*, and never meant to assert any thing farther. And if Mr. *Hallet* had said so, would you have counted it a crime in him? He and I are both innocent hitherto.

HE

HE goes on, and endeavours to fix somewhat upon Mr. *Hallet*, charging him to have spread their infamous books. If he means *Arius detected*, &c. I can't suspect him; if *The innocent vindicated*, he utterly denies it. He adds: That he hath changed his doxology both in prayer and singing. He kept to the common doxology in prayer for the most part, ascribing honour and glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that to the last; and as to singing, he knows of no change he has made, nor did he ever give the clerks such an order as I did, which shews the urging that in my case is only a sorry excuse for a bad cause, since he who comply'd with them, met with no more favour than I who would not.

As to leaving out the word *God* in that article of the communion of the Holy Ghost, in the benediction, he has two things to plead for himself. 1. That *St. Paul* has done so too. 2ly and especially, That he conform'd to the great standard of orthodoxy, Mr. *John Lavington*, who uses to leave it out in like manner.

Offence has been taken at Mr. *Hallet's* sermons, to my certain knowledge, when he gave none. I have been present myself, when not a word has been said about the Trinity, but he has insisted upon Christ's being the sole king of his church, and that men should make the scriptures the only rule of their faith and practice; and yet offence has been taken. One thing likewise which he sometimes spoke of was offensive, and that was *persecution*, which was taken to be an insinuation of a disposition in some to persecute. I am sorry it proved he had more foresight than myself; but I less wonder at some people's being offended at this than at any thing else; for who is so barbarous as not to start at the suggestion of their being capable of a thing so wicked? Who would not presently cry out

out with Hazael: But what is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? 2 Kings viii. 13.

HE charges him with shewing much inconstancy in his conversation about the matters of his own faith. No answer can be given to such a general charge; but one thing I may perhaps innocently say, that if this be taken for a sufficient ground to eject ministers, several more may meet with the same fate: I mean those who sometimes own, and at others disown, Christ to have been the son of God before his incarnation.

BUT, says he, to give instances of what has been done by these two ministers, in order to propagate and strengthen these notions is a way of much more clamour and contention, than the bottom their accusation rests upon. The truth is the accusation itself, according to his own account, has neither top nor bottom, as we say; but is all vain clamour and unchristian contention. What a disingenuous part do's he act, when he pretends we have done somewhat, and he could prove it, did it not tend to clamour and contention? whereas we defy him to allege and prove a single instance, and he has not yet done it. But 'tis the way of the man. When he speaks of our preaching at the desire of the Gentlemen, thus he comes off; p. 5. *And in what manner the deity of Christ was defended in pursuance thereof, the citizens need not be told.* Designedly imputing some crime to us, tho' we are not to know what it is, in order to our clearing our selves. I wish I could see how I might lay all the blame of his conduct upon his understanding.

BUT let us hear what the bottom is upon which our accusation rests. And 'tis this, as he tells us: *That they have not according to their bounden duty, used their endeavours to preach down and discourage those dangerous errors.* I remember nothing of this nature mention'd at our trial and ejection, and so

'tis very impertinent. But suppose it had been insisted on ; Was this a sufficient cause of ejecting us ? Must a minister be ejected if he has not the same apprehension of the danger of an error that perhaps his neighbours have, or can't follow them in all the wild consequences they would draw from it ? Or if he thinks it as *dangerous* as they do, is there a necessity of his agreeing perfectly with their opinion of the proper methods of opposing it ? Suppose he thinks a violent opposition will spread the error, as it has now been tried and found true, must he be ejected for that, or for being directed by his own prudence rather than other mens. And why might not I, for instance, without offence, pay a greater deference to the judgment of Mr. *Hallet* and Mr. *Withers*, than of Mr. *Lavington*, or even of the seven ? Suppose a minister is conscious of his own inability, and sees the controversy is too hard for him, and therefore leaves it to those who have more skill ; will he by such things deserve an ejectment ? Nay suppose that he has actually gratified the desires of people, and endeavour'd with all the plainness and evidence he could to clear the truth, and when he hath done so, is told he had better have let it alone, as a modest brother very civilly told me to my face, after I had preach'd upon the subject, and hereupon he is discourag'd from farther attempts ; is this a sufficient reason to eject him ? Must every minister be cast off that wants a particular minister's great abilities, or can't talk after his learned manner ? If what he here says be true, That it was our *duty to convince gainsayers*, I can't see but that others should have been ejected at the same time with us, for I question very much whether they have convinced any such, and if they should be *paid* according to what they have done of that nature, they will

short enough in their salary. His other spiteful insinuations I pass over.

HE has a singular passage, p. 10. *What he calls an Inquisition worse than that of Spain or Portugal, is evidently one of the plainest duties in the world; that men should be open in confessing their faith, when great and necessary reasons call for it.* There are three faults in this passage; the first is the small one they call *falsehood*; for I said not, that 'twas an inquisition worse than any in *Spain*, but that an inquisition was as truly set up as ever there was any in *Spain*. If he takes this way, I desire he will never pretend to be an explainer of my meaning. The second fault I charge the passage with, is that it is either downright confusion, or else a fresh instance of falsehood; for no one is so senseless as to call mens being open in confessing their faith *inquisition*; what I called so was the putting such tests upon men to extort confessions from them. And if he can prove this the *plainest duty in the world*, he will deserve a noble pension from the *Inquisition-office* in *Spain* and *Portugal*. The third fault is that 'tis impertinent; because every man must judge for himself, and not this author for every man, when *great and necessary reasons call for this open confession*. Besides, the ministers refused not an *open confession* of their faith; they made it publicly in the pulpit; they only refused to make it according to the test, which arbitrary men would impose upon them.

AFTER I had spoken, *Case* p. 2. of the seven ministers pick'd out as fit for the purpose, I added: 'Had an equal number been chosen on both sides, some good might have been expected: but these ministers, who were really parties in the controversy, pursued no designs of peace.' And here he asks, *how I can with any modesty urge this, since Mr. Hall t and I both refused a solemn conference?* The thing is plain enough. When they came, they

they came as arbitrators or judges, and 'twas unjust that all the arbitrators should be chosen by one side in a quarrel. And certainly when they had the vanity to act in that capacity, and took upon them to judge in our quarrel, I had reason enough to insist upon it, as I did, that they should *give no advice relating to me, without first hearing what I had to say.* And let the world judge of the prudence and equity of those seven ministers, by their not giving us a hearing. This which I propos'd was quite a different thing from what had been before propos'd to me. I insisted upon hearing the accusation against me, and the liberty of vindicating my self. But the offer made me was of a different nature; and let the world judge whether I did amiss in refusing it. A certain minister then sent his proposal to Mr. *Withers*, to be communicated to Mr. *Hallet* and my self; and afterwards I believe spake of it to us. It was, that a number of ministers should meet us statedly, and talk over the texts of scripture relating to the controversy; that if any text could not be answer'd at one time, they should consider it against the next. All that I could perceive design'd in it, at best, was, to deal with us like persons who were in some grievous error, in order to reclaim us; but I could not learn there was any design of impartially searching for truth: it was to convince us, not to be convinced by us: and such a conference I truly scorn'd. Besides, I thought I already perceiv'd their strength, and did not like to spend my time in what I apprehended would be an useless wrangling. And indeed some of those I supposed I must confer with, were men I could not much trust; and I believe Mr. *Hallet* might be of the same mind. I remember when Mr. *Withers* acquainted me with the motion first, he told me the answer he return'd was, That tho he was willing to confer with any ministers, he question'd

whether I would not think, that men who would censure me for my thoughts, would much more make me an offender for a word ; or to that purpose. And this writer shews plainly enough this was the design, when he tells us ; *It was farther propos'd, That if any evil consequences were apprehended likely to arise from such conferences, every one should subscribe to keep all that past secret FOR A TIME.* And so when that time was over, these Gentlemen might use their discretion. One would think such men had studied the art of insinuation, so successfully practis'd by the friends of the Inquisition abroad. And was it not prudent in us to avoid such a conference ? Who can tell what scraps of accusation they would have pick'd up from a free discourse ? whereas now our *righteousness* shines as the light, and our judgement as the noon day ; and our judges themselves are not able to give any tolerable account what they condemn'd us for. 'Tis true when three of the seven came to me, I declin'd talking of the controversy for the same reason I mention'd before. Besides, I did not apprehend that I was under any obligation at all to talk over the controversy with them. I insisted to them upon knowing what I was charged with, and found it lay in two things, viz. that I would neither preach, nor print about the controversy ; I remember very well I let them know ; that the same was the case as to moderate calvinism, about which I never had or designed to preach, tho' I thought my sentiments would have been agreeable enough to the greater part of the people ; and if the ministers pretended to prescribe to me what I should print about, I should scorn their motion.

The next paragraph relates to nothing in the *Case*. The truth is this ; two Gentlemen of the congregation seem'd more uneasy than the rest ; they had ask'd to me sometimes ; and 'tis very possible I might

might not satisfy them ; for they would be satisfied with nothing, unless I would say as they did. Afterwards I was willing to try whether I could not convince them, that I had a vastly greater notion of the work of redemption than they could have. I understood the great thing which struck with them, was that my opinion overthrew that, and so our salvation; and therefore I desir'd to talk freely with them; and the Gentleman who carried the message to them, brought me word from them, that they would both come along with him, that we might discourse the matter; but they never came. So that if I were to give an invidious turn, I might say, it was a fear of conviction that kept them from fulfilling their promise, rather than the unsatisfactoriness of former discourse upon the subject, which would have kept them from at first making it.

HIS next paragraph is a notorious falsification of my words: I speak of being heard by the arbitrators before they gave their verdict; he of a hearing before the Gentlemen. Nor is it true, that I refused to declare my faith; for in points in which I was satisfied, and they could have any right to demand my judgement, I was not unwilling to declare it, in my own, or in scripture words; tho' I would not be tied down to other mens, and particularly those of the seven.

HE says I *complain of haste*; but has the modesty not to tell in what respect, because he could not declare that without blushing for his friends. See *Case*, p. 3.

IF he will not understand the things he writes about, I cannot help it. The scripture makes it our duty openly to confess the faith we learn from thence, not that which men impose upon us. I never blame men for expressing the faith they think they have receiv'd from the scriptures, in
their

their own words; I do the same my self; but I never make my own words a rule to others.

If he knows I ever insist on any unscriptural form of words, that I require men to assent to, let him shew it: I declare I do not. Nay, as I always in proposing the *Creed* leave out the article of the *Descent of Christ into hell*, because I don't believe many understand it in the sense in which 'tis true; so I have declar'd that if any one sticks at any other article, I will either put it into scripture words, or leave it quite out. So that he may see I am very consistent; and his *certain reason* for which he says, *I scruple not the apostles creed*, he may still keep to himself; it can be none of mine, who don't know what it is.

I now come to the behaviour of the proprietors in shutting the doors against us, which I charge upon them as a notorious act of injustice. He sets down some words as tho' they were mine, tho' they are not; and indeed I don't blame him much, that he did not produce my words; for the thing was too foul for him to transcribe, unless he had been able to say something in answer. A quite different representation from mine was made of this matter, to justify their proceedings, before the *Case* appear'd; and loud outcries were rais'd against the *Case* at first; but when they knew I could prove what I said by substantial evidence, they grew cool upon this head, and now talk moderately, tho' they lay open their shame. He jumbles the committee of thirteen, and the four proprietors together, and instead of answering what I objected against the proprietors, he talks of an objection which he says was made against both. *They did*, says he, *act by themselves, and for themselves, but they knew, and were well assur'd, that those that love the truth would be of their mind in the main.* Sure the seven ministers have left the Gentlemen in the
lurch

Lurch, as I thought they would, *Case p. 7.* or I should not be put off with such a sorry answer. And however they may secretly applaud the management, and triumph in the success; yet I don't wonder that they are asham'd to declare openly to the world their approbation. Oh wretched cause! that is forc'd to be expos'd in a *libel*, because it can't procure so much as one person of any reputation publicly to set his name to the defence of it. Well, but let us consider what he says: and pray whom are we to understand by *those that love the truth*? Why may not this be the character of such as have impartially search'd after it, as well as of those who have taken up with an implicit faith? Or why may not this be the character of all, that they love the truth, however they may be in a mistake about it? Certainly they who find they love the truth, may abate a little, without any disparagement; of this air of infallibility, and allow that they themselves may possibly be in the wrong, and that other men may love the truth as well as they. But put this now into plain *English*, and suppose he means, as he evidently do's, that those who are of the minds of the Gentlemen are the only men that love the truth; and then he must be understood to speak such a great matter as this, 'That the Gentlemen were well assur'd that those who were of their mind, would be of their mind in the main.' And who can make any doubt of it?

BUT I would have him consider, that 'tis not men's *love of the truth* that gives them a right to justice; nor is property, any more than dominion, founded in grace. If this matter be consider'd with reference to the proprietors, it was a betraying of the trust lodg'd in them by the people, as well as an injustice and oppression towards the ministers; if it be considered with reference to the

thirteen, 'tis an assuming of that right which do's not belong to them. And indeed there is somewhat very aggravating in their conduct; for tho this controversy has been afoot these two years, yet they never once called the people together; but at last took upon them to proceed in such a violent manner of their own heads, notwithstanding there was an order agreed upon at the meeting of the contributors, that a meeting of them all should be summon'd once every year; to which agreement four of the present thirteen have subscrib'd their hands, as I have seen in the instrument.

And sure, says he, 'twas no unreasonable thing to presume on their consent, in a matter of such moment. The greater the moment was of the matter, with the more caution, exactness and justice, should they have proceeded. Besides, they really did not presume on the consent of the people, but were afraid of the contrary; as appears by the declaration of one of the proprietors, who could not be unacquainted with the methods of the thirteen, in the finishing stroke of which he was to have so great a hand: See *Case, p. 5.* He go's on, telling us; *'twas no unreasonable thing to suppose it to be no matter of doubt with them, whether they should stand by the doctrine of the Trinity, or not; or whether they should own the Son of God to be one God with the Father; This is not the point, as appears by what has been already said; but is only an amusement, to impose upon, and blind, the people. or whether they should stand by those ministers that will not profess and defend the true faith; He should have added, as it is contain'd in the scriptures, and not in the dictates of weak and fallible men. or leave the meeting houses open to such.* By the very same right they might have disposed of any part of the peoples estates, to support the same cause, presuming they were willing to be so used. I put it to this
writer

writer, whether the right was not the peoples? whether he believes in his conscience the people ever had the least thought of intrusting them with such a power as they assumed? whether all the rules of equity and justice did not require they should be consulted in the case, and that nothing should be done which the people had not impower'd them to do, without their concurrence? *The committee therefore, tho' acting for themselves, yet were fully persuaded, that the people would concur with them herein.* This is no more a justification of the committee, than it would be a justification of a judge, who condemn'd a man without the verdict of a jury, to plead, that he was fully persuaded a jury would have concurr'd with him therein. *nor were they disappointed in their hopes; for they have had their brethren together in a great body, who then declared themselves fully satisfied in the measures that have been taken for the security of their faith, and heartily thank'd them for it.* I answer, 1. That it is no justification of the arbitrary proceedings of a judge, who passes and executes a sentence, that he afterwards calls a jury together to approve of what he has done; and much less is this a justification of one who acts after that rate, assuming the office of a judge, tho' he was never intrusted with it. The question is, whether what the thirteen, and especially what the proprietors, did, was just and equitable in the doing? if it was not so then, it was not in the peoples power, by their subsequent approbation, to alter the nature of things, and make an unjust act to become just. 2. Supposing that the meeting he talks of had been the proper judges, yet was ever such a thing as this known, that the accusers alone should be heard, and the accused not have liberty to answer before their judges for themselves? Heathens would blush at such proceedings; *Acts xxv. 16.*

Thus we were dealt with at that meeting: things were laid to our charge, and we never heard. 3. Not a *great body*, but the *whole body* of the people, the same that chose us, had the right of judgment; whereas this was not the whole body of the people, but a junctio, or cabal of persons suppos'd to be of the same side; for the summons for their meeting was not general, but they left out such as they thought would oppose them; and when some of the ministers friends, tho' not summon'd, sent to know whether they might come among them, they were refus'd. And in the whole of their proceedings so little regard was had to justice, as that it was desired, and the least colour and shew of it was avoided. 4. To that meeting I may justly oppose another, when the ejected ministers sent a fair summons indifferently to all to meet them, and complained to those that met them, who were not a few, of the arbitrariness and injustice of what had been done against them; and that arbitrariness and injustice was condemn'd, and the ministers conduct approv'd, *nemine contradicente*.

HE says: *Mr. Peirce suggests*, That he would have had those that were dissatisfied to have withdrawn and left the place, i. e. *He would have had at least five parts in six to have gone out of a house which was their own, and have left it to those who would have alter'd their faith and manner of worship*. I suggested not that I would have had the greater number to give place to the less; but that they ought to have tried which was greater, and have left the matter wholly to the decision of the body: and truly had this been fairly done, I question much, whether the greater number had not then been on the ministers side. But had those of the proprietors side been not only *five in six*, but even nineteen in twenty, they ought to have with-
drawn,

drawn, unless they would put the matter to a fair trial, and turn out the ministers only by just proceedings. And to say the *house was their own* is absurd; it as much belong'd to one as another, and was to be dispos'd of wholly by the majority. Nor did we attempt to alter their *faith* or *manner of Worship*; for I hope a scripture worship is what they are for; and I suppose they will not charge me with altering my worship from what it was when they most approv'd of it. And now we heartily join with them in their *appeal to all the world, whether this be equitable*. The question is not, whether the greater number or the less should have withdrawn? but which was the greater or the less? which could only appear by calling them together, and leaving the matter to them. And as the ministers were put in possession by the whole body, nothing less than a majority could rightfully eject them; and if those who were the majority really, would not venture their cause upon a fair trial, they ought to have left the place to the other that that were willing to abide it. But I have yet another thing to mention on this occasion; and that is, supposing the proprietors side had been, according to this representation, five to one, and that they had by due proceedings turn'd out the other from the larger meeting, yet since they did not like to join with them in the worship of God, was it not cruel not to grant 'em one of the three places of worship? Had they been allow'd the smallest place, it would not have been disproportion'd to his own account of their number. If they might not be suffer'd to worship God with their brethren, should they not be allow'd to worship God at all? Why should they have been distress'd in such an arbitrary and cruel manner?

BUT, as he says, I do *insist*, That this should have been try'd by a vote; and I think his answer is little to the purpose, when he says; *This we acknowledge, would have been a regular way, and such as we would have chosen in an ordinary case.* I suppose, by an ordinary case he means such a case where they could be sure of carrying their point in a regular way; and by a *regular way* he must mean a way that is according to the rules of justice and equity; if he do's not, I would fain have him shew how it can be clear'd from, what I charg'd it with, being *unjust* and *oppressive*. And he ought to have consider'd, that the rules of justice are calculated for extraordinary, as well as ordinary, cases; and that no case can justify such a palpable and deliberate transgression of them. 'Tis upon this fact especially, as stated in the *Case*, that I ground my charge of injustice in the ejectionment; and tho' my representation was most sadly complain'd of at first, yet now it appears to all the world to be, in every part of it, just and true; and they who are the most concern'd, are not able to say any thing at all to disprove it. As little to the purpose is what he says, in the next place, to justify these proceedings, pretending *the proprietors acting alone in this affair, was, because they thought the doctrine of the Trinity, and the deity of Christ, were too great matters to be offer'd to the vote, or made the subject of contention.* Now, in answer to this, I desire to offer these things to their consideration: 1. That the referring it to the people to vote for and against our ejectionment, is not a putting the Trinity or deity of Christ to a vote. This is only an artful misrepresentation of the matter. 2. There is no greater sacredness in the four proprietors than in the body of the church; nay. as the one owe their constitution to the laws of Christ, and the other are a contrivance

for the sake of the law of the land, more respect was to be paid to the vote of the church than to the vote of the four; and yet I suppose the four ejected us by agreement, which is the same thing as by vote. 3. If the pretended matters were too great to be put to a vote, why did some people shew themselves so well pleased that the same were this session put to the vote in both houses? 4. Their practice carries in it the most injurious reflection upon the ever blessed God, as tho' he loved *robbery for burnt offering*, or his truth and cause could ever need to be supported by methods of oppression and injustice. How could this writer avoid thinking of those expostulations, which may as strongly be urged against acting as speaking? *Job xiii. 7, 8. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept his person? Will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out? or as one mocketh another, do ye so mock him?* 5. Is not this downright persecution? Is not here an unjust depriving men of their right and property for the sake of a supposed error in their judgment? And if that is not, what can be persecution? 6. Have not the Dissenters who have acted in this manner, or abetted those that have, justified the oppressions they used to complain of in their adversaries? Why might not they as well oppress to secure *episcopacy*, which they pretend to be absolutely necessary, as the Dissenters do the same, for the sake of any thing they pretend to be a necessary and important truth? With what face can they blame them for imposing tests upon ministers, when they practise the same thing themselves? or why should they charge them as setting up for infallibility, when they proceed in the same manner with them? I must own, I am for absolute liberty in matters of religion, and against any man's being persecuted for

for the sake of his religious principles, that do not affect the civil state. This I have over and over declar'd to the world; and I thought the Dissenters generally, and a very few only excepted, had been of my mind. In the simplicity of my heart, I judg'd them to be as sincere in their concern for the only ground of our toleration, as I am myself; and more particularly did I think so of my own flock, who had testified their liking of what I had written against persecution, in my *Vindication of the Dissenters* against Dr. Nichols, and my *Letter to Dr. Snape*: I am very sorry to find my self now convinc'd, I have been in a considerable mistake concerning them; tho' I own, and bless God for it, there are a great many Dissenters, and especially in *London*, who understand the foundations of their cause, and have shew'd themselves zealous for liberty. But as to the rest, I frankly now declare my judgment, that they have forever stopp'd the mouths of all advocates for them and their cause, that will pretend to talk consistently; nor is it a possible thing for a man of sense to defend them; and I profess my self a Dissenter from all such Dissenters; and I long to see the time, which these things seem working to, when the friends of liberty shall be form'd into one party, without any subdivision, being able to bear and join with one another, notwithstanding their different sentiments about abstruse matters, or modes of worship. And I hope it will please God to incline the hearts of our senators, not to regard the ill use some Dissenters may have made of the liberty granted them, by their endeavours to break in upon the liberty of others; but rather to contrive to ease the true friends of liberty of all burthens that lie upon them, that so such a union may become the more practicable.

I COME now to the Gentlemen's paper relating to the account I gave in the *Case* of our conference with them. They object against me four articles which I will distinctly speak to.

1. *In general then we say, the conference is greatly misrepresented; for he hath omitted some things that were offer'd, and were very material: As particularly, that it was propos'd, We would accept of the ministers assenting to the true and proper deity of Christ, either in the words of the proposition then before them, or of the first article of the Church of England, or of the 6th answer in the assemblies catechism, or of the declaration of the ministers assembled in our city in September, 1718, whereas Mr. Peirce only mentions the first and omits the other three.*

I ANSWER, 1. that I could have no design in omitting the mention of these three things, because as they were propos'd to us in a former conference in *November* as is related in this pamphlet, p.6. so it was always my intention in the larger *Case* I am preparing to mention them particularly. 2. I could not fairly mention these three things as propos'd at that conference, because I did not then, nor do I now, remember that they were particularly mention'd. Once indeed I remember that one of the Gentlemen took notice that three things were propos'd to us at a former conference; but I judg'd what he said to have been purely his own motion, without any previous agreement of the Gentlemen; and I am apt to think that he did not particularly name the three things; but that if he design'd it, some other discourse interrupted and prevented him. This I can say, that I cannot remember his particularly reckoning them up, tho I knew well enough what they were. 3. I believe every one present must remember and own, that the great thing insisted on and urged thro the whole conference, was that article of
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the seven; and I have the more reason to think, that the pretence now alledg'd, is a mere shift, because when I spoke with one of the Gentlemen before the conference, and ask'd him what we were to do at it, he told me the thing that would be put to us, was to own that the Son of God was one God with the Father, and mention'd nothing else. I might add too, that had the first article of the church of *England* been so particularly mention'd, why may it not be thought probable, that Mr. *Withers* would then rather have accepted it than be ejected with us?

II. *He hath misrepresented even that which was said not relating it right, either as to the manner or method in which it was spoken: and tho this is not very material in it self, yet it shews, the conference is not naturally represented, but artfully set out to serve a design.*

'Tis not to be suppos'd, that any man, in relating such a conference, can be always secure that he relates every thing just in the same order in which it was spoken. I can truly say I related it as near as I could in the true order of it, nor can I now recollect any one mistake I have made therein. I desire I may be help'd by them to put it in a better order, against the larger account appears. I know of no design I have serv'd, or needed to use art for: the naked relation of the fact being every way sufficient to answer my design. And if this charge is *not*, as they own, *very material*, I think it had been full as reputable for the ten subscribers, if they had not graced it with their names at the bottom. And that this cavil is very unreasonable, may appear by comparing the accounts which are given of the temptations of our Saviour in *Matth. iv.* and *Luke iv.* for the two latter of them are not related in the same order, and consequently cannot both be related in their *natural order*; so that they may even accuse one
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of the Evangelists themselves for the same defect they do me.

III. *He hath represented several things as spoken at this conference, which we are satisfied were not mention'd there at all ; and particularly from these words, p. 4. l. 13. And here they set down two passages they pretend I did not speak at the conference.*

Now, as to the latter of these, I have so very particular and distinct a remembrance both of my speaking it, and the occasion of my speaking it, that I could confirm the account I have given of it with the most solemn oath. I remember very well, I thought they were very close and reserv'd in their designs, and did not care to let us into what they were about to do ; which I do not now much wonder at : one end then I had in speaking as I say I did, was to pump out of them, if possible, what they purpos'd to do ; and as I had no answer from them, I really apprehended the reason of that was, because they would avoid discovering their design. Concerning this passage therefore I am very sure and positive.

I do not make much doubt, that I spake the other also ; but the reason why I will not be so positive about that as the other, is this ; that I had so often spoken the same thing in all companies, before that conference, that it was not so easy to say distinctly where I had spoken it, and where I did not. 'Tis possible, that as this was the often-declar'd sense of my mind, which I fully purpos'd to declare there too, I might think I had express'd my self so, tho' somewhat might put me by the doing it. And supposing I had not spoken in the conference to that purpose, I believe it was well known to have been before my declared sense, so that they would not be the more excusable in their proceedings. But, after all, I am verily perswaded I did speak so, and if the

gentleman who said to me, *Then we have your answer*, will please to recollect himself, I am persuaded, he will remember, it was upon my speaking in the manner I did, that he reply'd so to me. And as we were sometimes talking two or three in one company, and two or three in another, this might occasion what I said not to be taken notice of, especially if I happen'd to speak it to such as were less likely to remember it, thro' the *concern and surprize* they were in, as he expresses it in the next article.. And I think verily their denying my speaking these words is the less to be regarded, since they as much deny the other, which I can solemnly declare I did speak, and well remember to whom I directed them.

IV. *And whereas Mr. Peirce suggests, with respect to the final message mention'd, p. 5. as if some of the committee knew nothing of it; we certify, that it was put to the vote, whether we should discourse the ministers a second time, and resolved in the negative. And when they were consulting, who should let the ministers know it, and one offering to do it, ask'd, What shall I say? it was replied, What you will. Then he said, I will tell them, if they have no more to say to us, we have no more to say to them. And when return'd, being ask'd what he had said, he repeated the same words. And if this was not remember'd by any then present, it must be imputed to that concern and surprize they were in, when engaged in so melancholy a work, tho' so absolutely necessary for the preservation of truth. And is not this a confirmation of what I say? If two of the twelve (for no more were present) knew not of the message, as may be the case, since only ten subscribe this paper, may not what I say be true, notwithstanding this subscription? Two only might declare they knew nothing of the answer, and they are sufficient to justify my saying, some declare, &c. But besides*
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the two nonsubscribers, one of which I knew declar'd as I said, I can name two of the subscribers who declar'd the same thing before witnesses, who therefore must now subscribe to this, either upon the credit of others, or else upon their being help'd by their friends to recollect a matter they had forgotten, when they made that declaration. But let that be how it will; I, who can produce my vouchers, beside my own testimony, am not liable to any reflection upon this account. I pretend not to know any thing of what they transacted together, any farther than as I had it from themselves. And since the message is now own'd to be true in my account, I leave every man to judge as he thinks fit, of the *decency* of it, and whether it was consistent with the declaration they had just before made of their intention to *part amicably*.

I HAVE done with the Gentlemen's paper, and now I take my leave of them, declare, that however transported they have been to some acts, not only of indecency, but injustice, thro' the heat of their misguided zeal, I shall always honour and respect them; and it is my sincere desire, that no injury they have done me may ever be laid to their charge; for *I wot that thro' ignorance they did it*. Only let me say, as the book in effect owns the main of my charge, and that the way taken was not regular; so I wish that there had been at least some small regret express'd. But if they never should come to have any, I pray God to accept of that general repentance which I doubt not they live in the daily exercise of. As to the Gentleman in whose hands the declaration of the ten subscribers was left, I shall only say, that if the design of leaving it with him was to make the world believe that he approv'd of these proceedings, they have done him wrong; for he utterly dislikes them, as *irregular* and *arbitrary*, and resents the little trick

hereby that paper was, without his knowing any thing of the design, put into his keeping.

THE author of the Pamphlet now comes on again. 15. *He chargeth*, says he *a little book, lately published, intituled, Arius deteſted with weakneſs and malice*, I might well do ſo, tho my word is not *malice*, but *bitterneſs*. and ſaith, All wiſe men will diſpiſe it. My words were, as to *men of ſenſe* we know they cannot but diſpiſe it. But here he had occaſion to change them, that he might make his turn upon me come in the more handſomly. *He ſhould*, ſays he, *ſuffer fools gladly, ſeeing he himſelf is wiſe*. I have with tolerable patience born with ſome mens folly ; but I think he is very wrong, if he imagines that text will juſtify a writer in playing the fool egregiouſly, or make it unlawful for another to diſpiſe his management. And as for my ſelf, I make no boaiſting of my *wiſdom*, and my whole conduct in this affair will juſtify me, that I am not *wiſe* in that ſenſe in which the apoſtle ſpeaks of the *Corinthians* as being *wiſe* ; for I do not ſuffer it, if a man would bring me into bondage. 2 Cor. xi. 19, 20. He ſays : 'tis by ſuch fools and fooliſh books, we hope ſuch wiſe men as he ſhall be rebuked. 'Tis poſſible ; for better men than I have been liable to, and deprecated the ſame judgment : and I hope I may without offence pray with *David* according to the old tranſlation. Ps. xxxix. 9 *Deliver me from all mine offences ; and make me not a rebuke to the fooliſh*. It muſt be a bad cauſe that needs ſo ſorry an advocate, and they muſt be weak people who can be impos'd upon by ſuch an one. I found the ſame cenſure was paſs'd upon the book by as good judges as any I know, and I fear no hurt to my cauſe from books of that nature, where, people will vouchſafe to read on both ſides, as perhaps this writer would not care they ſhould. And the leſs am I in pain for what that pamphlet can do, becauſe I under-
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stand an answer has been undertaken by a person who is sufficient for the work, and do's not want for information concerning the state of our affairs.

I SAID of this book that it charges us with things we do not own, as that *Christ is a creature &c.* This charge, he says, is scarcely true; if it be scarcely true, it is true; as the righteous are saved, who are scarcely saved. But the thing is frequently charged upon us. Thus p. 8, *I have shown before what they think of Christ, a high and extraordinary creature.* so p. 9. this is made *their notion of Christ.* Again he says, p. 19. *The Arians while they hold Christ to be but a creature, pray directly to him, &c.* see p. 24. 25, 27, 28, But he go's on: *for the book only argues, that a voluntary production is a creature; but doth not assert that these men affirm Christ to be so.* But whence can he gather their notion but from their affirmations? And if he says this is our notion, is not that the same thing? And how do's he know we say Christ is a voluntary production? He knows Dr. Clark do's not venture to say so.

And whereas Mr. Peirce disclaims for himself and his followers the name of Arians for this reason, because he disowns the peculiar opinion of Arius; *We say, that it is hard to know what the peculiar opinion of Arius was; as it was for Arius himself to know his own, till his scheme was ripen'd.* And is not this a wonderful reason? If it be hard to know what his opinions were, will that privilege him at random to give men a name to set the mob upon them? Pray whereas the sense of calling us the disciples of *Arius*, if he don't know what his opinions were? But 'tis no hard matter to know what the peculiar opinions of *Arius*, were. If he will read a letter of *Alexander the Bp. of Alexandria* in *Socrates's history* L. I. c. 6. And *Arius's* own two Letters in *Epiphanius*, he may see them plain enough. But what right has he to give names of reproach to any of his

his fellow Christians? Do's he like it when it comes to his own turn to be so served? How do's he like to be called *Aerian, Sabellian, Donatist, Fanatic, Schismatic, Cromwellian*, or any other name of reproach; But I will direct this writer, in the words of Mr. *Baxter*, in answer to one who knew not what to call him. 'It, says he, you know not, I will tell you, I am a *Christian*, a *mere Christian*, of no other religion; and the church that I am of is the christian church—— But must you know what sect or party I am of? I am against all sects and dividing parties—— And now you know your own designs, your tongue is your own; and who can controul you, whatever you will call us? but I, and such others call our selves mere christians, or catholick christians, against all sects and sectarian names, and haters both of true hereby and schisin, and proud, unrighteous, hereticating and anathematizing. *Church History*, in the second preface.

WELL but he is sure the opinions now going were the main opinions of the Arians; and accounted Arian principles. And now let the reader mind what these are as he takes them from Mr. *Baxter*. One Arian principle is, *That there are three subsistences or persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. This used to be accounted orthodox enough; and so did the next Arian principle, *That God did from all eternity beget his only son, by whom he made time* (the world rather; tis *secula* in Mr. *Baxter*, and *αιωνας* in *Epiphanius* from whom he took it, the same word that we have *Heb. i. 2.*) and all things. As to the next two Arian principles, I am not chargeable with them, and the last is not in *Arius's* own letters in *Epiphanius*. And since this writer will so perpetually take it for granted, that I affirm Christ to be a voluntary production, I desire to know upon what evidence he do's it. for I am sure I never
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said any such thing. And this is no quibble or equivocation, whatever he may please to suggest to the contrary. I wish he would write as honestly as I do; he would not then say that *their plain and evident duty to so great truths as the doctrine of the Trinity, and the true deity of Christ, compell'd them to do what they have done.* For there is no duty that can compel men to acts of such injustice, as his friends are now convicted of. Justice is all I have ever desir'd from them in the case; and as to *compassion to my person or family*, I thank God I am above the asking it. If there be any *compassion* I desire, 'tis truly this; that by healing the breach among the people, and uniting them again in affection and communion, a way may be made for me to retire with a good conscience from the station I am in, till these calamities be (How long! Lord, ere they shall be) overpast. I never in the least contested the peoples right to chuse or eject their ministers. Had what is done been their act, and would they have held together; I had quietly acquiesc'd, in being laid aside as one who has *chosen a new faith*; tho I am well satisfied my faith is as old as the new testament, from whence I received it.

He *appeals* in his last paragraph to the whole world, *whether they had not just cause of uneasiness?* which is not the point in question: for that is, whether they have taken just measures to make themselves easy? I deny however that I gave them any just cause of uneasiness, if they will hold to their own principle, that the scriptures are the only rule of faith and worship. He farther appeals, *whether it be a crime in them, that they can't be satisfied to sit under the ministry of one, who will not own the Son of God to be one God with the Father?* He should have said, if he would have spoken fairly, that owns every thing the scripture says of the Son of God; but will bear to have the words of none but Christ impos'd upon him, as a test of his faith. *nor worship or*
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give glory to the Holy Ghost as God at all : I have much satisfaction in my having herein kept close to the scripture; and question very much, whether with their principles they could have been easy under the ministry of the apostles themselves. I am very sure my worship in this respect was unexceptionable; and they are not able to produce so much as one doxology in the scripture, that speaks as they would have had me do. But this is all foreign to the business. My complaint in the Case is of the violent and arbitrary measures by which they ejected me. or, *because we can't join in communion with those who declare,* 'Tis no sin to say Christ is a creature, or deny the deity of the Holy Ghost. All this is nothing to me, who am not charged with either of these things my self, and hoped I should not have been answerable for what was done by other men. But as to the expressions alleg'd; the person charg'd with the latter denies the charge; and as far as I can learn, there is good reason to believe he said no such thing as is pretended. He that is charged with the former expression gives this account of himself: That being in company, a certain person said; *There are many that say Christ is but a creature;* to which he answer'd, *I know none that say so; I never said so.* The person complaining grievously of those that did, he reply'd, *That tho' he had not said so, yet supposing any one, upon mistaking two texts of scripture, should say so, he would not say he sinn'd;* adding this as his reason, *That as he would not make that a duty which the scripture had not made a duty, so he would not make that a sin which the scripture did not make a sin.* And certainly such an expression do's not render a man unfit for christians to join in communion with him.

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